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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000101

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: FARDC INSURGENTS ATTACK IN NORTH KIVU

Classified By: PolOff TJNaber, reasons 1.4 b/d.

11. (C) Summary: A crisis in North Kivu caused by attacks by insurgents on several towns north of Goma seems now to be under control. The attackers are most likely FARDC insurgents, not yet integrated into the Congolese army, not General Nkunda or his supporters as widely reported. By January 23, only two towns remained with rebels. End summary.

12. (C) Up to 300 unidentified armed fighters took three towns in North Kivu overnight on January 19-20 and moved toward Rutshuru town the next morning, sending many 10,000 - 20,000 inhabitants fleeing toward the Ugandan border. Fifth-Integrated Brigade Commander Kasikili, an ex-Mai Mai fighter, apparently fled Rutshuru at the first sign of problems, inspiring the Brigade generally to fall apart.

13. (C) On January 21, MONUC redeployed two companies to Rutshuru and reinforced a company at Kanyabayanga, including with attack helicopters. FARDC Eighth Military Region Commander Amisi, North Kivu Governor Serufuli, MONUC North Kivu Brigade Commander General Satya, and MONUC Goma Head of Office M'Hand Lejuezi visited Rutshuru town later in the day to reassure the population. Governor Serufuli also spoke on Radio Okapi, denouncing the insurgents, and has reportedly been in regular contact with President Kabila. As a result, the Rutshuru population began returning to their homes.

14. (C) On January 22, a patrol of Indian MONUC peacekeepers came under fire near Rwindi. In the ensuing battle, four insurgents were killed and three captured. All but two small villages had been recaptured by January 23.

15. (C) Despite widespread reporting in the international and Congolese press, and despite a general belief among many Congolese in North Kivu and elsewhere, there is no evidence of any participation in these events by renegade General Laurent Nkunda. Likewise, rumors of Rwandan involvement also lack any proof. Indeed, in a January 23 meeting with the Ambassador (septel), Foreign Minister Ramazani, although aware of allegations against Rwanda, said he had heard nothing to support them.

16. (C) Far likelier, according to MONUC sources and others, is that the insurgents consist primarily of former members of Governor Serufuli's militia, now ostensibly integrated into the FARDC, although not in integrated brigades. They are not happy with integration and view the deployment of integrated brigades to the Kivus as threatening their position in the province.

17. (C) Kasikili, the Fifth Brigade Commander, is reportedly en route to Kinshasa, according to Goma-based MONUC sources. He has been replaced by Deputy Commander Esperant Masudi.

18. (C) As of January 23, it appears the crisis has peaked, with only two towns remaining under insurgent control. OCHA, along with humanitarian agencies, is en route to establish the extent of population displacement. The CIAT will have a previously scheduled meeting today with the Espace Presidentiel (President and four Vice Presidents) and will convene independently following the meeting to discuss the situation in North Kivu.

19. (C) Comment: The attacks are a sign of the continued volatility in the region, and of the inevitable consequence of the ongoing process of change associated with a gradually shifting power structure in the area. Furthermore, they starkly show the limitations of FARDC -- even of trained and integrated units such as the Fifth Brigade.

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